

## **Mifflin Township heartily welcomes Lt. Torres back to full duty**

Nearly 100 firefighter/paramedics, family and friends met at Mifflin Township Fire Station 131 in Gahanna, Ohio Feb. 25, 2013 to welcome Lt. Anthony Torres back to full active duty after almost a yearlong recovery from an accident that left him without his lower left leg.

Thirty-eight year-old Torres was riding his motorcycle on one of the warmest days on record March 21, 2012 on Polaris Parkway in Columbus. A driver did not yield on a left turn, and Torres crashed into the side of the car flying over the top of it with a landing that caused irreparable damage to his left ankle. Miraculously, his only other injuries were a broken thumb and small abrasions to his arm and knee.

He spent 11 days in the hospital and had four surgeries one included the amputation of his lower left leg. His doctor said it was the worst ankle/foot fracture he had ever seen. Torres' hospital room was overflowing with fellow firefighter/paramedics showing their support. Amputee firefighter/paramedic Earl Barnes of the Lawrence Fire Department in Lawrence, Kansas also came to spend time and encourage the injured lieutenant.

"It was unbelievable all the support there was for me while I was in the hospital," Torres said. "I didn't want for anything."

Torres was fitted with his prosthesis eight weeks after his surgery and began his long road back to prepare for full duty which included extensive training and physical therapy. He passed his return-to-duty skills evaluation Feb. 15, 2013 at the Columbus Division of Fire Training Academy following months of hard work.

"I thought I would have been back to full duty before now," he said. "I didn't want to come back too soon because I would never put my guys or the public in jeopardy."

Torres started part-time with the Mifflin Township Division of Fire in June 2000 and was promoted to lieutenant in April 2009. He works on 1 Unit at Station 132 on Agler Road also known as the "Blacksheep". He is the first known amputee firefighter/paramedic in Ohio to return to full duty as a frontline firefighter.

"It is with great honor to know such a hardworking friend and brother firefighter who is willing to fight for the chance to go back to the Mifflin Township Fire Division," said Columbus Division of Fire Captain Steve Heselden. "Lt. Torres has portrayed already the greatest battle and shows us all what determination is truly all about. We are all proud to know him and welcome the chance to again work with him as he returns to his job. With great pleasure and honor, we all support him in his compassion and strength. He will remain in our hearts and prayers as he returns to full duty."